

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today sent a letter to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric K. Shinseki commending the VA for its exemplary renewable energy leadership and urging the agency to match the Department of Defense's (DOD) 25 by 2025 goal, which requires that the department obtain 25 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2025.

"I am pleased that the VA has set a clean energy goal of 15 percent electricity obtained from renewable sources, which goes above and beyond mandates set by Congress and the President," said Hinchey. "I am hopeful that the VA will again outdo itself by setting a new goal to match that of the Department of Defense, which has pledged to secure 25 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2025. By reducing consumption of fossil fuels and becoming more energy efficient, the VA can save valuable taxpayer dollars while at the same time improving the environment. It's a win-win, and I hope the VA will take on the challenge."

In 2005, Congress passed legislation to require that 7.5 percent of the federal government's electricity come from renewable sources by 2013. In response, the VA announced the short term renewable energy goal of 15 percent 2013, which is double the federally mandated commitment. Hinchey, a co-chair of the newly-formed bipartisan Defense Energy Security Caucus and long time advocate for clean energy, has encouraged sustainable, long-sighted approaches to both military and non-military energy usage.

In addition to asking the VA to set even higher clean energy goals, Hinchey commended the VA for its renewable energy leadership to date, noting that 33 of the VA's 424 Green Management Program projects are being implemented in VA facilities in his home state of New York. Hinchey expressed optimism for the future of the VA's renewable energy initiatives and continued role in creating a more sustainable America.

"The future of American energy is rooted in photovoltaic systems, wind turbines, and biomass-fueled projects, and I eagerly look forward to seeing more of these systems integrated into VA facilities in New York and across the country," wrote Hinchey. "Americans look to our veterans as prime examples of honor, valor, and bravery. My hope is that in this same spirit, our nation will look to them as exemplars of sustainable energy practices that reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, save money, and protect the environment."

The full text of [Hinchey's letter to Secretary Shinseki](#) follows:

August 16, 2011

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

I am writing to share my strong support for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) renewable energy initiatives and to encourage the Department to establish even more aggressive energy goals. As you may know, I have been a strong advocate of renewable energy programs throughout my legislative career, most recently launching the Defense Energy Security Caucus, a bipartisan initiative to highlight the strategic value of utilizing more efficient and sustainable energy sources for the U.S. military.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has done an exemplary job creating and implementing a nationwide sustainable energy plan. As a member of New York State's congressional delegation, I have paid particular interest to the 33 energy projects that the VA is implementing in 14 of New York's 87 VA facilities. The future of American energy is rooted in photovoltaic systems, wind turbines, and biomass-fueled projects, and I eagerly look forward to seeing more of these systems integrated into VA facilities in New York and across the country.

As a Navy veteran, I have been pleased to see the VA set a clean energy goal of 15 percent electricity obtained from renewable sources, which goes above and beyond mandates set by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT) and Executive Order 13423. I am looking forward to 2013 when the percentage of the VA's electricity obtained from renewable sources will be double the 7.5 percent required by EPACT. A 15 percent renewable energy goal by 2013 is laudable, but progress must not stop there. As you may know, the Department of Defense (DOD) has pledged to secure 25 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2025 and I urge you to continue leading our nation by example by matching DOD's 25 percent by 2025 goal.

Americans look to our veterans as prime examples of honor, valor, and bravery. My hope is that in this same spirit, our nation will look to them as exemplars of sustainable energy practices that reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, save money, and protect the environment. I look forward to working with you on this important matter and I appreciate all of your efforts on behalf of our nation's veterans.

Sincerely,

Maurice D. Hinchey

Member of Congress